

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANT: LA GRECA, Gaetano

SERIAL NO.: (International Appn No. PCT/EP03/04061)

FILED: (Intl. Filing Date 17 April 2003)

TITLE: BACKPACK ATTACHMENT FOR IMPROVED DISTRIBUTION OF THE
BACKPACK WEIGHT ACROSS A USER'S SHOULDERS

Preliminary Amendment: CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently amended) A backpack attachment for use with backpacks that have a bag- like body-(CS) and a pair of shoulder straps-(T), in particular backpacks-(Z) used by school attendants, being effective to distribute the backpack weight in a rationalized fashion across ~~the~~ a user's shoulders, ~~and characterized in that it comprises~~ said attachment comprising:

two curved members (~~t~~) arranged to stiffen substantially ~~the~~ sections of the shoulder straps (~~T~~) ~~that lie~~ closest to ~~the~~ an upper region of the bag-like body-(CS).

2. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 1, further comprising:

two substantially inflexible curved members mounted in place ~~of the~~ at closest sections of the shoulder straps-(T) to the upper region of the bag-like body-(CS).

3. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 1, further comprising:

two substantially inflexible curved members associated with the closest sections of the shoulder straps-(T) to the upper region of the bag-like body-(CS).

4. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 1 to 3~~, Claim 1, wherein said substantially inflexible curved members ~~(1)~~ have ~~their~~ an underside thereof lined with a soft yielding material ~~(3)~~.

5. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 1 to 4~~, consisting of Claim 1, further comprising:

a pair of substantially inflexible curved members ~~(1)~~, each ~~as~~ member having a one-piece construction ~~(2, 2A)~~.

6. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 1 to 4~~, Claim 1, further comprising:

a pair of substantially inflexible curved members ~~(1)~~, wherein ~~said~~ the curved members are ~~made up~~ comprised of several pieces ~~(6)~~ jointed to one another.

7. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 5, wherein ~~said~~ the curved members ~~(1)~~ are of hollow construction and ~~adapted to be slipped~~ slippable ~~each over one of~~ said shoulder straps ~~(T)~~.

8. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 5, wherein ~~said~~ the curved members ~~(1)~~ are hinge-ably connected to a holder ~~(4)~~, said holder being ~~adapted to be~~ affixed to the upper region of the bag-like body ~~(CS) of the backpack (Z)~~.

9. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, having wherein the curved members ~~(1)~~ ~~made up~~ are comprised of hollow pieces ~~adapted to be slipped~~ slippable over said shoulder straps ~~(T)~~.

10. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, wherein ~~the~~ leading ~~one (7) of said~~ hinge-connected pieces ~~(6)~~ in each curved member ~~(1)~~ ~~can be~~ is affixed to the upper region of the bag-like body ~~(CS) of the backpack (Z)~~, with ~~the~~ a trailing ~~one~~ hinge-connected piece carrying the shoulder strap ~~(T)~~ fastened thereto.

11. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, wherein ~~the~~ a leading ~~one (9) of said~~ hinge-connected pieces ~~(6)~~ in each curved member ~~(1)~~ ~~can be~~ is affixed to the upper region of the bag-like body ~~(CS) of the backpack (Z)~~, with the shoulder strap ~~(T)~~ extending from ~~said~~ the leading piece ~~(9)~~ through ~~the~~ other pieces ~~(6)~~ connected thereto.

12. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 6, wherein the curved members ~~(1)~~ are ~~made up~~ comprised of several shaped pieces ~~(11)~~, ~~each~~ adapted to be associated with the shoulder straps ~~(T)~~ in a detachable manner, at least one ~~(14)~~ in a lockable manner.

13. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 12, wherein ~~said~~ the leading pieces ~~(11)~~ of ~~said~~ the curved members ~~(1)~~ ~~can be~~ is associated with the shoulder straps by ~~means of~~ releasable hoops ~~(12)~~, ~~the other~~ another piece ~~(14)~~ being associated with the shoulder straps by ~~means of~~ a releasable camlock device ~~(15,16,17)~~.

14. (Currently amended) The attachment of Claim 12, ~~wherein~~ further comprising:
a locking arrangement ~~(19,20)~~ intervenes intervening between ~~the~~ jointed pieces ~~(11)~~ of each curved member for maintaining a set angle between individual ~~ones of said~~ pieces.

15. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 12 and 13~~, ~~WHEREIN said~~ Claim 12, wherein a set angle between individual jointed pieces(~~11~~) of each curved member(~~1~~) is adjustable.

16. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~Claims 12 to 14~~, Claim 14, wherein said locking arrangement (~~19,20~~) comprises, mounted on one side of each ~~said jointed pieces~~(~~119~~), a gear wheel (~~19~~) and a lockable spring-biased slider(~~20~~), said slider being formed with an end jaw (~~21~~) ~~adapted to engage~~ engageable with teeth of a gear wheel(~~19~~) on the adjacent ~~one of said~~ pieces.

17. (Currently amended) The attachment of ~~any of the preceding Claims~~, Claim 1, for use in a method of correcting abnormal curvatures of the spine.